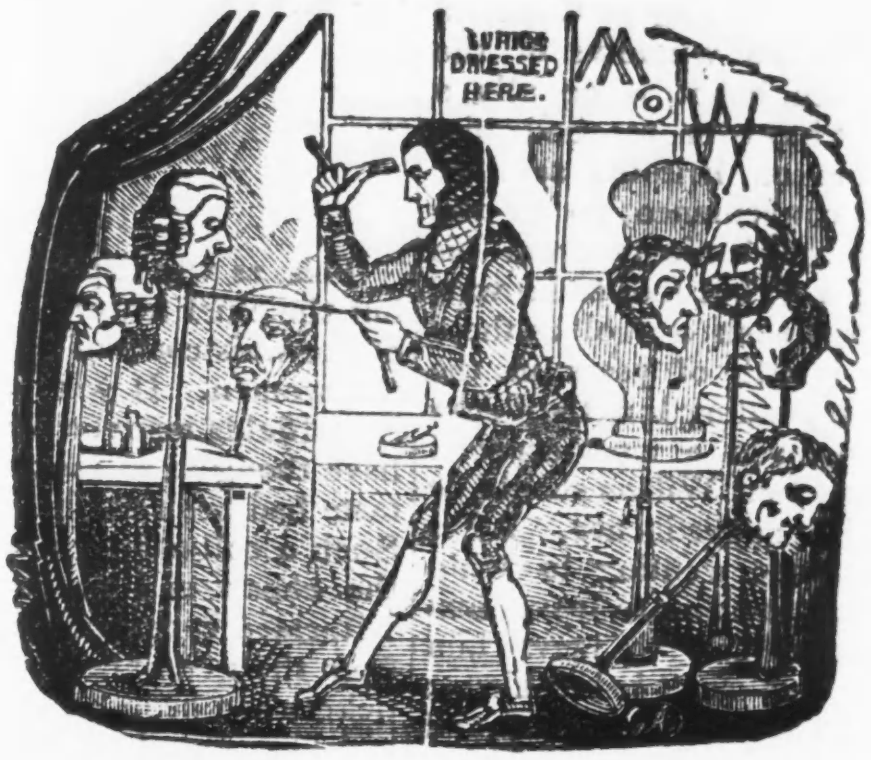
FIGARO IN LONDON.



Satire should like a polish'd razor keen,
Wound with a touch that's scarcely felt or seen.—LADY MONTAGUE.

"Political Pasquinades and Political Caricatures are parts (though humble ones,) of Political History. They supply information as to the person and habits often as to the motives and objects of public men, which cannot be found elsewhere."—CROKER'S NEW WHIG GUIDE.

No. 288. SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1837. Price One Penny

THE VICTORIA BILLET DOUX.

The Common Council has been in a state of the greatest excitement, owing to a bit of absurdity on the part of one of its members, which has filled with astonishment the whole world, and put that pretty little puddle, the City of London, into a storm of furious excitement.

It seems that when the Common Council went up with an address to the Princess Victoria, one of the members, to the great surprise of all present, popped into the hands of Sir John Conroy, a nice little scented *billet*, written on note paper of the pinkest hue, and of the most glittering edges. Not one of the assembly dared venture at the moment to make a remark, but the agitation of the whole crowd was excessive, some putting it down to the score of high treason, others treating it as lunacy, while all agreed in pronouncing it, to be damned impudence—nobody knew what on earth Mr. Wilson the unfortunate transgressor could have had to say of a private nature to his royal mistress, and awful were the surmises on the subject. Some thought he had been declaring an insane and blasphemous passion, others thought it contained a large piece of nasty unwholesome sweetstuff, whilst those who are more up to snuff, imagined that it was a card of the shop, which he had taken thus improperly an opportunity of putting into the hands of the Princess Victoria. The next day however when the Common Council got together, they entered into a long debate on the subject, and began to blow up Wilson sky high for his extraordinary behaviour. Whether Wilson had any naughty intention and had bribed Sir John Conroy as a go-between, or whether it was merely a quiz upon Sir John, who is at all times ready to fall like a fool as he is into any net that is spread for him, or whether it was this or that, or something or nothing nobody seemed to know, but every one appeared to agree that the breach of decorum was of a very alarming character. Wilson however, at last, condescended to explain, when it turned out to be neither this, nor that, nor the other. It was not a love letter, it was not a card of the shop, it was not a little bill forgotten by the Princess or left unsettled by the Duchess: it was not a brandy ball, it was not gingerbread, but it was worse than all, an impious request for the young Princess's portrait!! What encouragement Mr Wilson may have ever received, to have induced him to make such a bold and presumptuous proposal he has not so far molested the royal confidence to let us know, but we have every reason for supposing that nothing has passed between Victoria and old Wilson at all to justify the clandestine correspondence which the latter has attempted. It is true that Wilson is in love with the Princess, but only that

W. Strange, 21, Paternoster Row.

sort of love that a Common Councilman always feels for a slip of royalty; and it is also true that he has long been the laughing stock of the nursery maids in Kensington Gardens, by his sentimental attituding opposite the windows of the private apartments in Kensington Palace, but it is equally a fact that the only communication that has ever reached him from the Palace, was a request from an irritated scullery maid, that he would, at his earliest convenience, go to the devil and shake himself. Wilson caught it nicely from his offended colleagues on the following day, but fool as he was, we do quit him of being one tenth part such a fool as those who censured him. Laurie, whose length of years in the Common Council, has led to a corresponding length of *ears* in the asinine acceptation of the term, made a most especial flare-up on the occasion, and proposed that Wilson should be well whipped by Jack Ketch for his impertinence. After snarling away for a couple of hours, one wanting to whip Wilson, another to reprimand him, and another to leave him alone, they had nearly agreed unanimously to leave him alone, when Wilson himself starts up, and *won't be* left alone; but declares they must and shall go on with the question, and that they shall not withdraw their motion. However, after they had all agreed they ought to censure him, when they found he wanted to be censured, they would not do it, and so the thing dropped, adding one more to the ponderous catalogue of civic fooleries.

Our artist has taken a more searching view of the subject than we should have thought it worth, put his happy idea of making Wilson in the act of bestowing a *bonus* upon poor bottle-Jack Conroy, as the King calls him, is sufficient to render the *tableau* worthy of the very minutest attention. For our parts we do not think that any harm can arise from Wilson's indiscretion, though we are truly of opinion that if Sir John Conroy allows himself to be made a vehicle for carrying private letters between foolish old men and the Princess Victoria, a month's wages or a month's warning is the only course that the Duchess of Kent ought to pursue with regard to him.

JOE GRIMALDI.

This extraordinary clown is dead, and all the Newspaper people have been at very great pains to tell us so. They have lamented him in sixpenny paragraphs, and have been as sentimental at a penny per line, as their masters would allow them to be. We don't know why so much fuss has been made about the death of this certainly very clever mountebank. His own habits had rendered him dead to the public for many years, during which, but for those habits, he might have been continuing his calling with profit to himself and a certain species of satisfaction to the public. But as by his own intemperance he had long deprived us of any pleasure we might have derived from seeing him perform, we cannot make out how he is any more lost to us now than he has been for the last ten years. The gin-drinking paper people twaddle vastly over the interesting fact, that of late years he has been obliged to be carried 'pick-a-back' by the landlord to a gin-shop, in Pentonville, and all we can say is, that the landlord and Grimaldi ought both to have been ashamed of themselves, Joe for being such an inveterate tap-room frequenter as to be carried to it when he could not walk, and the landlord for taking an evidently unfair advantage of the mental imbecility of a customer. It appears it was the delight of Grimaldi to sit drinking and gossiping half the night in a public-house, and that he did so 'the night before his death' as usual. He was consequently called into the presence of his Maker in a 'beery' state, and must have been more than half 'moppy' when the lond trump of death summoned him. And yet the public is requested to be very melancholy, and to go into the fashionable half-mourning of a long face upon the occasion. We regret him certainly as we should the sudden 'exit' of aany confirmed toper, but as to anything more we are not prepared to recognise Grimaldi's disease by a lengthy commentation. He certainly could cram more sausages down his throat, and make uglier faces than any man alive, but as he had for so long rendered himself unfit to do any thing of this kind in public, we cannot look upon his death as a national calamity.

THE SPITALFIELDS BALL.

This, as was expected, turned out to be a very grand affair, but the chief feature of the evening was the tawdry vulgarity of the waistcoats of the men, and the remarkable ugliness of the women. It was not allowable to go in anything but Spitalfields manufacture; and so far, so good, but we should have thought, to look at the waistcoats, that Holywell Street taste had been enjoined, as well as Spitalfields manufacture. Such a collection of vulgar finery, such *showy patterns*, as the cheap and nasty tailors call them, we never before witnessed congregated under one roof, and we should say, from the general aspect of the men at this ball, that all the tickets had been benevolently bought up by haberdashers, and liberally given away to their shopboys and apprentices. It is true that there were shoals af uniforms, but any one who has ever looked inside any of the shops in Monmouth Street, will be well aware that a red coat, (turned up at the seams with white, and finished off at the cuffs and collars with grease,) may be worn, at least, for an evening, without the expense of a commission, though many of the uniform wearers last week might be said to be in the *guards*—that is, the *black-guards!*

The women were remarkably ugly. Small-pox, seemed to be the fashionable ornament to the face, though some appeared to have a preference for pimples. A few of the ladies, and the young one's in particular, looked, (as the Princess Augusta whispered to us,) as if they had had a glass of whey thrown in their faces and had not wiped it off properly. Augusta herself was in full feather, and was rigged out as finely as the pattern black doll at the door of a marine store shop. She wore white muslin trousers, bought near Spitalfields, a white muslin frock, very short, that had been mangled in Spitalfields, and a red sash, dyed near Spitalfields, and a pocket handkerchief of white cotton, picked up in some field not *Spital*. She was exceedingly merry all the night through, bowed to the public till the public got quite tired of bowing again, and every time she turned her head, took the opportunity of getting a draught of porter out of what, she says, is the only thing it ever ought to be in—*the pewter*. The Princess Victoria danced, and went home early, and the Princess Augusta wanted to dance, but was not allowed, nor would she go home early. It is said that four thousand pounds were cleared by the ball. This we cannot answer for. A great many pockets *were cleared at the ball*, for of this, we regret to say, we had some personal experience, having been robbed of a set of nine-pins, which we had brought with us, as a present to the Princess Victoria. The dancing was exceedingly brisk, and as each person had not above six square inches to dance in, it was, of course, unusually elegant. The closeness of the quarters gave every opportunity to the swell mob, who did not lose a point, and who set to their partners' with truly laudable anxiety. We have not heard how much *they made*; but, we have no doubt, that they were satisfied with their evening's amusement.

GOVERNMENT SECURITY HUMBUG.

The state of politics in all countries has most materially affected the confidence once placed in Government Securities,

and now to dabble in the foreign funds, is almost as good a joke as to trust Lord Alvanley for a bottle of soda water. The manner in which every nation has in turn victimised its fundholders has naturally spread an alarm through the whole race of stock-jobbers, and the consequence is, that the foreign attempts to negociate new loans, now almost universally turn out to be failures. For instance, there is the Spanish Government has had an alarming advance of the ready; and now the shabby rogues won't even pay the interest, but meet their creditors with a paltry proposition to take it out *in cigars*,—and so the loan is to terminate in smoke, like the hopes of the fund-holders.

But the *coolest* of all governments is that of *Chili*, and that extreme *coolness*, fully entitles them to their *Chilli* title. These people finding themselves quite unable to meet the claims of their creditors called a meeting, with the professed object of proposing some method of paying off the interest that had accumulated unpaid upon Chili bonds, when the ambassador (d—n his impudence) offered with truly Irish generosity, and a *coolness* that does credit to the *Chili* court, he represents to pay them by making a new debt of them and letting the amount stand over. The creditors could not stand this, and we are informed that they rejected the proposition with disgust, pelting the poor old ambassador with orange-peel and other missiles of a not very agreeable character. The alarming state of bankruptcy in which many of the continental governments are found to be, renders it a most frightful thing to trust money in the hands of any of them. Even that reckless cut-throat Carlos has been trying to get up a loan, but we do not hear that there are any fools who have been hardy enough to risk the mopusses. We would not lend him six-pence to pay his fare to the gates of the infernal regions, though he will ultimately find his way there without such accommodation.

THE CEMETERY COMPANIES.

Either the Cholera or the influenza, or both, or something else, has caused so much death within the last two or three years that a new channel has been opened for speculators who seem strongly disposed to embark their capital on *death*, which as it is the only *certain* thing, apparently promises to make it safe as an investment. We have no objection to a set of joint-stock-jobbers feeding as it were, upon the dead bodies of their fellow creatures, and if they can live upon human carcasses we waive any right we might have to complain of the ferocity of the practice. They may "easily mumble the bones of the dead" to any amount for what we care, and may invest millions in carrion if it can fill their ravenous stomachs,—but when they propose to do that which interferes with the public convenience, we feel it our duty to be prepared with our nine-tailed feline instrument of punishment.

We hear on all sides complaints that these cannibals, in the form of shareholders, are making the most desperate attempts to stop up the lungs of the metropolis by enclosing all the healthy places in the suburbs, and thus play the double game of making London unhealthy, and killing the people first, and then burying them afterwards. They have made a violent effort to get hold of Primrose Hill, and have succeeded in getting a large slice of the open space about Highgate, though they have fortunately failed in a vile effort to help themselves to Hampstead Heath, which it was intended to convert into one extensive bone-house or sepulchre.

In addition to their infamous attempt to convert the outskirts into a huge coffin, they have been round alarming families and friends by sneaking solicitations, to allow them to bury fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, relations, friends and acquaintances. But this is not all the wholesale undertakers have traitorously applied to the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, to *patronise the undertaking*, which they can only do, by allowing themselves to be buried there at their very earliest convenience. They also have had the impudence to request the heiress presumptive to lay the first stone, which under the circumstances must of course be a tomb-stone, and if it be a *tomb-stone*, the little Princess will have precious hard work to lay it, if she should be good-natured enough to undertake to perform the disgusting ceremony. It is a remarkable fact that *the doctors* are the principal speculators in this hearse-like concern, and we warn the public to get a list of them, and avoid consulting them in cases of illness, as they may probably make use of a few of their patients to give what they would call a *start* to their blood-thirsty project.

WHO ARE YOU?

A paragraph in the Herald informs us that the heir of the house of Paltimore was christened in Grosvenor-square last Wednesday. This puts us in possession of several new facts; first, that there is a house of Paltimore, which we did not know; secondly, that it has 'got an heir' thirdly, that there is anything 'about the house to be made heir to;' and fourthly, that 'the cub was christened on Wednesday.' The ceremony was however performed when the Duke of Sussex was godfather 'represented' by 'Mr. Somebody,' and the Countess of Uxbridge was 'represented' by 'Mrs. Somebody,' It is quite evident that the Duke and the Countess were ashamed of the turn-out, for they would not come in person but sent deputies. The 'Paltimores' are people we never yet heard of, and the christening of 'a young 'un' has been thrust under the eyes of newspaper readers in a manner as presuming as it is objectionable. We dont wonder at the Duke of Sussex declining to take a part in the farce but he sent his man-cook down to stand in his stead, while the Countess of Uxbridge packed off her 'femme de chambre' or anybody else that liked to go, out of the number of her domestics, just to quiet the 'Paltimores.' We can only say that the insignificant though titled 'Paltimores' must be greatly in want of friends, or they never would have been permitted to have exposed themselves as they have done to redicule by trumpeting their trumpery christening in the public journals.

THEATRICALS

Drury Lane has been tolerably well filled during the week, but as the expenses amount to about three or four hundred pounds per night, and as the receipts, at the best, have not much exceeded two hundred pounds, we fear that the aggregate profits have been of the very shyest description. Bunn, however, like a cat thrown out of an attic window, is sure to come down upon his legs, and, therefore, we have no doubt, that he will eventually come through all his difficulties. There is an elasticity about him that seems to prevent his ever being prostrated in inactivity upon the soil, and we, therefore, look forward to affairs taking a more favourable turn with him.

Covent Garden has been going on much in the old way, and that way is a very bad one. Macready has left, and Mr. Elton is acting all the leading characters in tragedy—supported by Mr. George Bennet on the right, Mr. Pritchard on the left, the rear being brought up by Messrs. Collett, Bender, J. Webster, and Thompson. It could be hardly expected that there could be anything like money made out of such materials, for until a silk purse can be effectually made from a sow's ear, we have strong suspicions that actors cannot be made of the above named gentlemen. We are looking forward in fond expectation, and ardent hope to see the last night of the season announced, for it is indeed a desirable consummation. We have heard, on good authority, that the house is positively to be *swept* during the recess, and an arrangement has been entered with a char-woman, who has consented to go in and clean, on condition that the public scavenger goes before her. 'Just,' as she forcibly says, 'to break the neck of the thing, by removing some of the worst of it.'

Levy, who is ever anxious to execute a *capais*, or to serve a friend with a *fi fa*, has taken hold of the useless and headless body of a poor little man,

named Somerset, and by virtue of an old outstanding *cognovit*, has locked him up, and fattened him on dutch cheese and beer, and told him to write a piece, and Somerset under the hectic inspiration of a meal, fermented by some cheap intoxicating drink, has fancied that he can do something of the sort, and he has written a thing he calls 'Yorick, the King's Jester.' Throughout the whole piece, Hamlet is carried about the stage on Yorick's shoulders, the latter cutting some of the stalest jokes, and asking the most disgusting conundrums, merely because Yorick is described by Shakespeare as 'a fellow of infinite jest and humour,' who has carried Hamlet upon his back a thousand times. This is all very fine fun for Mr. Marshall and Mr. Somebody else, who run pick-a-back about the place with exuberant whim, but we are happy to say that the official authorities of good taste have interfered to put a stop to the whole proceeding, and 'Yorick the King's Jester' is vanished even from the Victoria. We live in very strong hopes of seeing this place of amusement rescued from the hands of the pack of Jew Bailiffs who now strut about it, in their little brief authority of theatrical management, and we are glad to say, that when the law of arrest is abolished, and the Theatre shall have lost for him what he has got out of the poor unfortunates that have come beneath his thumb, Levy's occupation will be altogether gone. We have heard particulars of a *flare up* between the Jew bailiff and his accomplished wife, on the subject of one of the *figurantes*, who rejoices in the Levite name of *Hart*, and who it is said, includes more than dancing in the services given for her twelve shilling per week salary. In answer to various correspondents who wish to know the history of the Levy gang, we give their biography in brief. Old Levy is a sheriff's officer in Newman Street—and of his sons; Lawrence Levy is the lessee of the Victoria, and a bailiff in Fetter Lane,—he has a brother who calls himself Charles, and who has got somehow or other admitted an attorney, while there is another, George, (also *Lewis*) who is an auctioneer, *or was* an auctioneer somewhere. The lawyer angles for clients, and when he has caught them, the bailiff arrests them, and the auctioneer sells them up, so that if a man is to be eaten up, devoured and done for, *not a bone* need go out of the family. We nevertheless think that the crew have made a great mistake in connecting themselves with the Victoria theatre, and that they will find themselves entangled in a web, from which they will find it not a very easy task to extricate themselves eventually. Folks are sometimes too cunning for themselves, and the Jew bailiffs seem just now in that predicament.

Vandenhoff and Butler have been playing together at the Surrey, and have drawn a few good houses during the week, Davidge however, is very naturally desirous of seeing the Adelphi company back again. We have heard that Butler has taken a farm near Boulogne, we wish success to his pigs and poultry—and trust that his ducks and geese may be annually profitable. We shall be happy to take our butter from him.

We perceive that Webster has advertised his company, which is a very good one, and we wish him success with it. Macready's performances will be a great point in favour of Webster, and as his undertaking is a hazardous one, we wish well to it.

We perceive that Miss Desborough takes her benefit at the Royal City of London Theatre, on Tuesday next. Her bill of fare is extremely attractive, and though we generally abstain from recommendation, yet on this occasion it is so well merited, that we trust our readers will honour her with a bumper.

Vauxhall has been open during the whole of the week, and we are very happy to say, that the weather having proved fine, has been much in the pockets of the very deserving proprietors of this delightful establishment. The entertainments are of a very varied kind this year, and they go off with the greatest spirit. We hope that they will be more fortunate in the selection of their next vaudeville, for the one they have commenced with, is by no means such a thing as might have been expected from the excellent quality of the other amusements.

There is a species of Vauxhall at WHITE CONDUIT HOUSE, which though not on the same extensive scale as its great prototype, is a place, where one, or more than one, may pass a very pleasing evening.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

We perceive that a new edition of Modern Plays is advertised, uniform with Cumberland's, at half the price of that edition. Such a spirited undertaking must meet with universal encouragement.

Buzzo will, perhaps, favour us with a call.

Our dirty correspondent at Kensington, is informed that the best public bath near the Metropolis, is that in the Westminster Road. He may get a good wash there for three-pence, and we advise him to take advantage of this elegan tpportunity for combining economy with cleanliness.

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